BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

BOARD OF WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MAY 14, 2024

DATE APPROVED: MAY 21, 2024

Tina Diedrick	District 1
Darek Vetsch	District 2
Jeanne Holland	District 3
Nadine Schoen	District 4
Michael Kaczmarek	District 5

Members Present: Tina Diedrick, Jeanne Holland, Michael Kaczmarek, Nadine Schoen, Darek Vetsch

Others Present: Caitlin Chovan, Kim Fox, Ryan Ferguson, Becky Harrington, Lee Kelly, Greg Kryzer, Leah Larson, Mike MacMillan, Marc Mattice, Lindsey Meyer, Lori Vicich, Tammi Solarz, Ward Westphal, Jeff Wheeler, Clay Wilfahrt

Commissioner Darek Vetsch began the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

I. Schedule Meetings as Needed

Committee of the Whole: Public Health
Scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 28, 2024

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only.

II. University of Minnesota (UMN) Extension

West Central Regional Director Lori Vicich, Director of Operations Systems Becky Harrington, Youth Development Program Leader Leah Larson, and Wright County Extension Educator Kim Fox presented to the board a 2024 Wright County 4-H presentation highlighting youth development outcomes and approaches, community impact, programming, participation, enrollment and volunteer trends, project areas, leadership opportunities, and the budget broke down by expense category. Vetsch suggested an evaluation of the existing 4-H funding model to include a 5 to 10 percent investment in administration. Vicich explained most administrative costs were covered by UMN Extension funding. Commissioner Jeanne Holland suggested an evaluation of Scouting's, previously known as Boy Scouts, funding model for Wright County 4-H funding options. Commissioner Michael Kaczmarek suggested 4-H fundraising activities beyond the food stand and beyond fair time to increase additional revenue and contribute to the building maintenance needs. Planned fundraising by the 4-H program for the 4-H food stand building maintenance and needs was being coordinated. The 4-H program averages annual revenues of $133,000, average expenses of $125,000, and average discretionary funds of $125,000. Fox stated most discretionary funds were used for programming and staffing needs, with very little remaining for other initiatives. General discussion of fairground uses beyond county fair dates, food stand uses, and additional revenue activities was had.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only.

III. Wright County Fair Board

Wright County Fair Board President Ward Westphal and Fair Board Treasurer Jeff Wheeler presented the board with a property for sale adjacent to the existing fairgrounds and acquisition options. Discussed were the required steps for acquisition, the feasibility of a joint acquisition between the fair board and Wright County, and a return on investment. There was no interest by the board in moving forward with the acquisition.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only.

IV. Safe Schools Presentation

Director of Court Services Mike MacMillan and Juvenile Supervisor Tammi Solarz presented to the board the Safe Schools Initiative highlighting the origination, history, school district participation, goals, accomplishments, and annual number of meetings. Solarz stated overwhelming support from schools for the August annual All-Safe Schools meeting in preparation of the school year. MacMillan stated each school is granted autonomy in determining how often meetings are scheduled and what staff should attend, including school board members. The number of meetings scheduled is evaluated annually and determined by participating school input. MacMillan noted the Safe Schools Initiative has become a model for other counties and nationally in fostering relationships and building partnerships between local government and local school resources. MacMillan and Solarz stated the benefit and value of the Safe Schools Initiative to communities and youth goes well beyond quantifiable data; however, work has begun in gathering analytics with the support of Geographic Information System (GIS) Coordinator Larkin Walter.

Discussion included individual school autonomy in determining meeting dates, meeting times, meeting frequency, and school staff attendance. MacMillan stated he would continue his past practice of communication with school administrators – superintendents and principals to determine the 2025 meeting dates and times. MacMillan stated the majority of schools schedule four meetings annually. Solarz noted that scheduled meeting dates with each school district and knowledge of school staff invited allows for county coordination of appropriate staff to be in attendance and provide resources and address individual district needs. Health and Human Services (HHS) Social Services Manager Michelle Miller added that annual strategic needs of schools are prioritized based on changing needs. Based on strategic needs, Miller noted the county staff present has resulted in increased effectiveness of resources provided to efficiently meet needs. Miller noted that an absence of county staff at meetings would result in additional follow-up meetings, additional communication, and delayed responses and resources for the needs presented at the scheduled meetings. County Attorney Brian Lutes added that the Safe Schools Initiative has had a direct benefit to participating schools with indirect benefits to the county. Lutes acknowledged the county department collaboration and expertise among Court Services, HHS, and the Sheriff's Office staff to provide the relevant county staff at meetings.

"Kaczmarek noted that there is ability to meet virtually by zoom or teams that wasn't available when safe schools meetings started 30 years ago. With now over 50 of these meetings a year that is about 100 hours of staff time with commuting and the one hour meeting for every staff member that goes to every meeting. There are at times four levels of staff from Wright County offices or departments attending these meetings. Some of these offices/dept. are ones that are often asking for more new staff." The board suggested the 2025 Safe Schools Initiative meeting schedule avoid monthly meetings with participating school districts to ensure good stewardship of time and resources for county and school staff. Another suggestion offered by the board for consideration was the use of technology in conducting meetings when feasible.

RECOMMENDATION: Board directed staff to work with participating schools to try and reduce the frequency of meetings the are scheduled to ensure good stewardship of time and resources for county and school staff.

V. External Survey Questions

County Administrator Lee Kelly summarized an external survey as part of the strategic initiatives projects for improving customer services and increasing engagement. The developed questions focused on three areas: public engagement methods, quality and timeliness of service provided, and constituent satisfaction with county operations. The survey format, number of questions, question format, survey methods, technology platforms, and follow up of captured data were all discussed. The consensus of the board was for staff to move forward with the launch of the external survey with follow up results reported to the board between August and October of 2024.

RECOMMENDATION: Board directed staff to move forward with the launch of the external survey with follow up results reported to the board between August and October of 2024.

VI. ARMER Radios / 800 MHz

Assistant County Administrator Marc Mattice provided the board with a summary of documents provided in the agenda. Highlighted points from Mattice included leased tower locations, one spare ARMER Radio remaining, inability to purchase the same system as it is no longer produced, a completed Baker Tilly municipal advisors eligibility questionnaire for use of recovery funds, and a Granite Electronics quote to purchase and install new equipment. Discussion included leasing of additional towers for radios, Information Technology (IT) required at tower locations to operate radios, storage of spare radios at tower locations, lifespan of ARMER radios exceeding expected lifespan, and limitations on use of 911 emergency funding to cover costs.

Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels noted that the grant writing for ARP funds would be completed and brought to the board for approval to ensure a signed contract by the end of 2024. The consensus of the board was to continue to use the old system components and the spare, install the secondary system to ensure operations, and, once the old system is no longer serviceable, look at a complete second system upgrade replacing all the old equipment.

RECOMMENDATION: Board consensus was to continue the use of the old system components and the spare and move forward with purchase and installation of secondary system.

VII. Process for Contract Review

Kelly provided the board with a Program Structure Proposal for Contracts Process Improvements. The proposal included an overview, objectives, and program structure. Kelly noted the program had three planned projects that included contract document centralization, standard contract language, and contract user groups. Kelly shared the initial analysis of the current contract process was on a much larger scale than anticipated. Work would continue with the analysis to ensure the scope of the program is accurately captured before work is started on three projects. Vetsch stated that contract procurement challenges to Wright County are not unique and common across Minnesota counties, especially auto-renewed contracts. Vetsch advised the contracts process improvements program focus on manageable, small contracts first to become comfortable with process improvements before expanding to larger and more complex contracts. Discussion was had on the challenges of contract procurement to a centralized process due to the vast nature of contracts across departments. Discussion also included planned workflows to ensure contract review by staff from Finance, Risk Management, and Legal departments. Kaczmarek stated that all contracts, new or renewed, should be agreed upon with the most efficient and effective use of taxpayer money. Kaczmarek also stated that businesses, local or otherwise, should have the same opportunity for bidding of contracts whether new or renewed.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only.

VIII. Commissioner & Legislative Updates

Vetsch stated that a lot of work and decisions were to be made in the final two weeks of the legislative session. Discussed were the driver's license testing provisions as part of the Transportation Finance and Policy omnibus bill, the bonding bill which would impact Wright Technical Center, and a tentative agreement with the *Tyler vs. Hennepin County* tax forfeiture issue which is expected to result in legislative funding and fixes this session.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational Only.

IX. Staff Rehire – Consent Agenda

The May 8, 2024 Budget Committee of the Whole recommendations included all backfill positions be brought forward to the board for approval as consent agenda items. Kelly provided a handout detailing the information and documentation staff would provide to the board when requesting rehires. The documentation would include: the positions direct contribution to the county's strategic objectives; fiscal and operational costs to the department if not rehired; how the position is budgeted; activity and key performance indicators showing the need of the position; position description; and organizational structure.

Kaczmarek stated that grant-specific positions should be very accurate and detail costs not covered by the county, for example, administrative, supervisory, and professional development costs. Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt stated that grant-funded positions could include ancillary costs such as equipment and professional development; however, detailing administrative and supervisory costs per position would not be accurate due to varied nature of grants and positions. HHS Business Manager Jim O'Dell noted that grants often account for a "portion" towards supervisory time but varies per grant and position. Vetsch stated that if a grant position would likely trigger a need for additional supervisors, that should be articulated to the board when requesting approval for position. "Kaczmarek agreed with putting all staff rehire or back fill positions on the consent agenda except for the procurement analyst. That one should be on for consideration. The consensus of the board was to do this."

RECOMMENDATION: Board consensus to bring forward all staff rehire or backfill positions on the consent agenda, except the procurement analyst position which should be brought forward as an item of consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

County Board Workshop minutes submitted by Kelly Kosloski, Administrative Specialist.